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## The Theology of Jeremiah.

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THE statement, now generally accepted, that the prophets were preachers rather than theologians, is as true of Jeremiah as of any of their number. By his theology, therefore, is meant, not a system of doctrine taught by him as such, but the aggregate, in a more scientific form of presentation, of the principles that constitute or underlie his prophetic teaching.

It was not necessary for Jeremiah to assert the existence of a God. No one in his day seems to have doubted it. The gentile as well as the Jew would as soon have ventured to question the reality of his father. The fault of the times was of an opposite character. Men, even Jews, saw the divine in so many and so diverse experiences that they inclined to believe in a multiplicity of deities. This was an ancient error. Its existence among the early Hebrews is abundantly attested; but perhaps the most instructive passage is Jud. xi. 21 ff., where Jephthah is represented as recognizing Kemosh as no less really a God than Yahweh. He believed that the latter was the more powerful, otherwise he would not have trusted him; and this was probably about the extent of the claim of loyal Hebrews generally, not only in his day but for a long time afterward. Hence such expressions as, "Who is like thee, Yahweh, among the gods" (Ex. xv. 11); "Yahweh is the greatest of all the gods" (Ex. xviii. 11), etc.

In Jeremiah's day many of his countrymen had receded from Jephthah's position, going so far as to desert Yahweh and to adopt the gods of their neighbors (ii. 10 f.; v. 19), Baal (vii. 9), Ishtar (vii. 18), Molokh (xxxii. 35), and others almost without number (ii. 28). In the end they justified their disloyalty to the God of Israel by claiming that they had found it to their advantage to change their religion. When Jeremiah threatened those who had migrated to Egypt with destruction because they persisted in burning incense to other gods, they replied, "We will certainly fulfil the

whole vow that hath gone forth from our mouths, burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring libations to her as we have done, ourselves and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then we had plenty of food and it was well with us, nor saw we any evil. But since we ceased to burn incense to the queen of heaven and to pour libations to her, we have lacked every thing and perished by the sword and from famine" (xliv. 17 f.).

Jeremiah, in his efforts to persuade his people to renew their allegiance to Yahweh, was not content to maintain, with Jephthah, that their God was more powerful, and therefore more worthy of reverence, than any other divinity. He had learned of Amos (ix. 7), Hosea (xiv. 3), and Isaiah (ii. 8), and he taught more emphatically than either of them, that the God of the Hebrews was the only proper object of worship, obedience, and confidence, and that the so-called gods of the gentiles were not entitled to the honor paid them by their devotees. He repeatedly contrasts the true God and his false rivals.<sup>1</sup> He declares in so many words that the latter are not gods (ii. 11; v. 7); that they cannot help those who trust in them (iii. 23), being like cracked cisterns that will not hold water (ii. 13): and no wonder, since they are mere stocks or stones, which owe any semblance of life that they exhibit to human dexterity (ii. 27). It might be objected that it was unfair for Jeremiah thus to identify the gods of the gentiles with the stocks and stones against which he inveighs; but the point is not well taken, for the great majority of his hearers (or readers) probably did thus identify them; and if any one had insisted upon a distinction, the prophet would doubtless have denied the existence of the beings supposed to be symbolized, or declared that, if they existed, there was no ground for recognizing them as deities. Perhaps he would have repeated his question, "Are there among the vanities of the nations any that send showers (xiv. 22)?"

It is interesting, in passing, to note the names by which Jeremiah designates the true God. The one most common in his book is Yahweh, which occurs more than seven hundred (710) times, and in about four-fifths (563) of all these cases without any added title. When this name has a supplementary designation, it is seldom (only 41 times) "my God, thy God," etc. These facts bear on the question

<sup>1</sup> The most extended passage bearing on this point is x. 1-16; but it goes so far in the direction described, and so much resembles Isa. xlv. 8 ff., that scholars are inclined to attribute it to some one in Exilic or post-Exilic times. See Driver, *ILOT*<sup>6</sup>, 254; Giesebrecht, *in loc.*; comp. Streane, *in loc.*

of Jeremiah's relation to Deuteronomy, where, as is well known, Yahweh alone is rare, but "Yahweh thy God" remarkably frequent, except in apparent additions to the original work.<sup>2</sup>

The most frequent addition to Yahweh is the phrase "of hosts" (38 times), or "the God of Israel" (15 times), or a combination of the two (31 times). See also "Yahweh the God of hosts" (twice), and "Yahweh the God of hosts, the God of Israel" (4 times). The descriptive phrase "the God of Israel" is not here used in the sense in which Jephthah (Jud. xi. 23) used it. He thought of Yahweh as one among many national deities; Jeremiah doubtless meant to emphasize the fact that, although he was "the God of all flesh" (xxxii. 27), Israel alone had thus far recognized his sovereignty. The name "Lord" occurs with "Yahweh" (Eng. GOD) 8 times, and with the fuller "Yahweh of hosts" 6 times. The peculiar combination just cited, "Yahweh, the God of all flesh," appears but once; so also "Yahweh of hosts, our God." The name "God" is rarely found without "Yahweh," and when it is so used it usually has a pronominal or other modifier; as in the expressions "his" or "their God" (3 times), "the true God" (once), "the living God" (twice), "the great, the mighty God" (once), "a God that recompenseth" (once), and "a God at hand and not afar" (once). Twice only is "God" strictly a proper name. Yahweh is also called "the King" (once), "the everlasting King" (once), and "the King of the nations" (once). Finally, he is twice, and only twice, called by the name, frequent in the book of Isaiah, "the Holy One of Israel."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In 1 of the 41 cases mentioned the descriptive clause is "my God," in 17 "our God," in 7 "thy God," in 7 "your God," in 1 "his God," and in 8 "their God." These figures also have significance.

<sup>3</sup> The above figures represent the usage with respect to names of the Deity in the book of Jeremiah as a whole. As has already been suggested, there are parts of the prophecies traditionally attributed to him whose genuineness is questioned. The following are the passages of any importance bracketed by Giesebrecht: i. 3; iii. 17 f.; iv. 27 b; v. 10 a<sup>3</sup>, 18; ix. 21/22 a<sup>2</sup>; x. 1-16; xii. 4 a, 14 b<sup>3</sup>; xiv. 1; xv. 11-14; xvi. 14 f., 18, 20 f.; xvii. 11-13, 19-27; xviii. 4 a<sup>3</sup>, 20 a<sup>3</sup>; xix. 3-9, 11 b-13; xxi. 11 f., 14 a; xxii. 8 f., 25 b; xxiii. 10 a<sup>3</sup>, 19 f., 36 b<sup>3</sup>; xxv. 1 b, 4, 7 b, 12-14, 20 a, 22, 24 a, 25-31, 35-38; xxvi. 22 b; xxvii. 1, 7, 10 b, 20 b, 21 b; xxviii. 14 b, 16 b<sup>3</sup>; xxix. 14, 32 b; xxx. 2-24; xxxi. 1, 7-14, 16 b, 21-26, 35-40; xxxii. 1-5, 17 a<sup>3</sup>-23, 30 b, 35 b; xxxiii. 2 f., 11 a<sup>3</sup>, 14-26; xxxiv. 1 b, 21; xxxviii. 9 b<sup>3</sup>; xxxix. 1 f., 4-13; xl. 4 b; xli. 14 a; xlv. 1 b; xlvi.; xlvii. 1 a; xlviii.; xlix. 1-6, 9, 12-39; l.-lii. In these suspected passages, aggregating nearly a third of the book, "Yahweh" alone occurs 172 times, "Yahweh of hosts" 17 times, "Yahweh the God of Israel" twice, "Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel" 7 times, "Yahweh my (etc.) God" 6 times, "Yahweh of hosts our God" once, and "Lord

It is clear that Jeremiah taught the unity of God. It may be inferred from his antagonism to material symbols of every sort and his avoidance of the anthropomorphisms frequent in the works of earlier writers, that he thought of Yahweh as a spirit; but there is no express declaration to this effect. The other metaphysical attributes so-called are more clearly taught. The power of Yahweh is magnified. It is he, says the prophet, who "by an everlasting decree made the sand a bound for the sea, which it doth not pass. Though the waves thereof toss themselves, they do not prevail; though they roar, they do not pass it" (v. 22). In another passage Yahweh is represented as asserting not only that he made the earth and everything in it, but that he fixes the destinies of its inhabitants. "I," he says, "made the earth, man and beast that are on the face of the earth, by my great power and by my outstretched arm; and I give it to whomsoever it seemeth right in my eyes" (xxvii. 5). In the next verse he says that he has given all the neighboring lands, even the beasts of the field that they contain, into the hands of Nebuchadrezzar, his servant; and in xviii. 6 ff. he asserts that not only Israel but all the nations are completely in his power and under his control, like clay in the hands of the potter. See also i. 10, 15; v. 15 ff.; xxiii. 7 f.; xxv. 9; xxviii. 14 a; xliii. 10 ff. In all these cases the thought of the omnipotence of Yahweh is intended to inspire fear and reverence; but this is not the only possible effect. He is a "fountain of living water" (ii. 13) to those who seek him, and "a mighty champion" (xx. 11) of such as fly to him for refuge. In him, and him alone, is the help needed by Israel (iii. 23). He can deliver even from the mighty hand of the king of Babylon, for he is "the God of all flesh" and nothing is too difficult for him (xxxii. 27).<sup>4</sup>

Yahweh of hosts" 5 times; while neither "Yahweh the God of hosts," "Yahweh the God of hosts, the God of Israel," "Yahweh the God of all flesh," nor "Lord Yahweh" appears at all. On the other hand, "Yahweh of hosts our God," "God" with a modifier (except in two cases), "King," with or without, and "the Holy One of Israel" occur only in these passages. Of the expressions used by both, "Yahweh the God of Israel," "Yahweh of hosts the God of Israel," and "Yahweh my (etc.) God" may be regarded as Jeremianic, and "Yahweh of hosts" and "Lord Yahweh of hosts" as more characteristic of the later writer or writers by whom the book was enlarged to its present dimensions.

<sup>4</sup> The omnipotence of Yahweh is most explicitly taught in some of the suspected passages above enumerated; and this is one of the reasons for doubting their genuineness. A hint of the greatness of God is given in xvi. 21, where he is represented as threatening to make known to his people his "hand" and his "might." In x. 6 the writer exclaims, "There is none like thee, Yahweh; thou

The universal control of men and things implies omnipresence and omniscience. Jeremiah combines the three attributes in xxiii. 23 f., where he represents Yahweh as saying, "Am I a god at hand, and not at a distance? or can a man hide himself in secret places where I cannot see him? Do I not fill heaven and earth?"<sup>5</sup> His sight reaches the thoughts and purposes as well as the actions of men (xi. 20; xii. 3; xvii. 10; xx. 12),<sup>6</sup> and his knowledge extends not only to what is but to what will be, even to the future actions of his free creatures (i. 5; vii. 27; etc.).<sup>7</sup>

Among the moral attributes of Yahweh Jeremiah, like his predecessors in the prophetic office, gives great prominence to righteousness. In an appeal to God, when hard pressed by the people of Anathoth, he addresses him as "Yahweh of hosts, who judgest righteously" (xi. 20). In another passage (ix. 23/24) he makes Yahweh himself say that "judgment and righteousness" are among the things in which he especially delights; and in a third (ii. 5) he represents him as asking, "What unrighteousness did your fathers find in me, that they withdrew from me?" True, the prophet seems sometimes to have questioned the correctness of his own teaching on this subject. In xii. 1 he feels himself impelled to protest, "Why is the way of transgressors prosperous? why do they that practice treachery enjoy tranquillity?" But he introduces this protest with a

art great, and thy name is great in might"; and in xxxii. 17, "There is nothing too difficult for thee." See xxxii. 27. Therefore, in xxxiii. 2 he is called "Yahweh who planneth to accomplish." "He made the earth by his might, established the world in his wisdom; and in his understanding he stretched out the heavens" (x. 12; see also xxxii. 17). In fact, "he is the fashioner of all things" (x. 16). He "placed the sun for light by day, and appointed the moon and the stars for light at night" (xxx. 35). His power is manifested in the processes of nature. "When he uttereth his voice there is a roar of water in heaven, and he causeth vapours to rise from the ends of the earth; flashes with rain he maketh, and bringeth the wind from his storehouses" (x. 13). "At his wrath the earth quaketh; nor can the nations endure his anger" (x. 10). Such is "the portion of Jacob," he who has chosen Israel for his people (x. 16).

<sup>5</sup> Giesebrecht, following the Greek Version, omits the interrogative in the first clause of xxiii. 23, but he would not change the interpretation of the passage.

<sup>6</sup> For a repetition of the thought of xvii. 10 in a doubtful passage, see xxxii. 19.

<sup>7</sup> The wisdom of Yahweh receives no attention from Jeremiah, but it is strongly emphasized in some of the additions to his prophecies. According to xxxii. 19 Yahweh is "great in counsel" as well as "mighty in work." "He established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens" (x. 12). Man is foolish in comparison. "Among all the wise men of the nations," exclaims the author of x. 7, "there is none like thee!"

confession that Yahweh always vindicates himself when his righteousness is questioned, and in xvii. 10 he endorses the divine declaration, "I, Yahweh, search the heart, try the reins ; giving to each according to his way, according to the fruit of his doings." Such is the more direct evidence on the point in question. There is further proof of the prophet's belief in the righteousness of his God. The doctrine is fundamental in his preaching. It appears in the passages in which justice and uprightness in men are commended (xxii. 3, 16 ; etc.) or their opposites condemned (xxii. 13). Add to these the cases in which the prophet explains the evils suffered by his people as divine judgments, the penalties of offences against righteousness (vii. 12 ; xii. 4 ; etc.), and it will be evident that his sense of the righteousness of Yahweh was deep and constant.

How, then, did Jeremiah answer his own questions with reference to the prosperity and tranquillity of the wicked? The solution of his difficulties he doubtless found in the thought of ix. 23/24, where Yahweh is represented as saying that he exercises "lovingkindness," as well as "judgement and righteousness, in the earth." At any rate, he taught that, although Yahweh is righteous, he does not always at once punish those who deserve punishment, but bears with them as long as there is any hope of their reformation. The divine longsuffering is touchingly portrayed in ch. iii. Here, as in the book of Hosea, the relation between Yahweh and Israel (in the narrower sense) is pictured as that between husband and wife. In *v. 1* Yahweh says, "Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return to me" ; and a little later (*v. 7*), "I said after she had done all these things, Let her return to me, but she did not return." The prophet twice (xxvi. 2 f. ; xxxvi. 2 f.) says that Yahweh, when giving him a message to his people, added, "It may be that they will give ear and return each from his evil way." He repeatedly refers to preceding prophets as agents of a longsuffering God (vii. 13 ; xxix. 19 ; etc.), and, like Amos (Am. iv. 6 ff.), interprets the misfortunes that his countrymen have hitherto suffered not as penalties imposed by an offended Judge so much as chastisements devised by an anxious Father (ii. 30 ; v. 3 ; etc.).

Of course there is a limit to the divine forbearance. There are several passages where Jeremiah uses language which, strictly interpreted, would mean that the salvation of his people was then no longer possible. He represents Yahweh as saying to him, "Pray not for this people, nor lift up cry for them nor prayer, nor intercede with me ; for I will not listen to thee" (vii. 16) ; and again, "Though

Moses stood before me, and Samuel, my desire would not be toward this people. Send them from my presence . . . I am weary with repenting" (xv. 1, 6). See also xi. 14; xiii. 14; etc. In all such cases, however, it is taken for granted that the people will remain deaf to the prophet's warnings and entreaties. Whenever the possibility of repentance on their part is suggested, he at once meets it with an offer of mercy (iii. 12, 22; etc.). Indeed he puts into the mouth of Yahweh a declaration of his willingness to spare at the last moment: "If I speak of uprooting and overthrowing and destroying a nation or a kingdom, the moment that nation turneth from its wickedness I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to it" (xviii. 7 f.). In other words, the teaching of Jeremiah is, that, while there is no escape for the incorrigible, whenever the guilty turn to Yahweh, he is too merciful to deny them forgiveness. See especially iii. 12.

The faithfulness of Yahweh is implied in passages in which he is represented as reproaching the Hebrews with breaking their covenant with him (xi. 10; xxxi. 32; etc.), but the only passage in which it is expressly taught by Jeremiah is i. 12, and there he confines himself to putting into the mouth of Yahweh the simple statement, "My word I am on the watch to fulfil."<sup>8</sup>

Jeremiah had no occasion to deal with the nature and condition of primeval man. At any rate, he says nothing on the subject. But he has much to say about the moral and spiritual condition of his contemporaries, and one may infer from these utterances something with reference to his idea of man as man. He certainly recognized the freedom of the human will. This doctrine is implied throughout his prophecies; e.g. in his frequent arraignments of his countrymen for their sins (i. 16; ii. 5; etc.), and especially in the entreaties which he now and then represents Yahweh as addressing to them (iii. 11 ff.; xlv. 4; etc.). At first sight xviii. 6 seems to teach a different doctrine; but the discrepancy is only apparent, for, although Yahweh says that the house of Israel are in his hands "as clay in the hand of the potter," it is clear that this statement has reference to outward circumstances rather than inward dispositions, since he at once explains that his treatment of the nations depends upon the

<sup>8</sup> There are fuller and stronger statements on this subject in certain passages whose genuineness is questioned. Thus, in xxxi. 35 f., Yahweh declares that the order of nature is not more trustworthy than his partiality for Israel, and in xxxiii. 20 f. he makes a similar statement with reference to his covenant with David.



attitude which they themselves take toward him : in other words, that, whatever else he may do, he does not interfere with the freedom of his creatures. See also x. 23. In xxxi. 18, for "turn thou me," etc., read, "let me return, and I will return."

The prophet is very outspoken on the subject of the moral condition of the Jews of his time. He says that Yahweh commanded him, or any one (this seems to be the meaning of the plural), to traverse the streets of Jerusalem and see "if there be any that doeth justice, that seeketh truth" (v. 1). The leaders, he says, "with one accord have broken the yoke, have burst the bands" (v. 5). "From their least even to their greatest," he continues (vi. 13), "they all practise pillage, and the priest as well as the prophet dealeth in deception." See also ix. 3/4. He charges his countrymen not only with sinning but with being habitual sinners. He illustrates their condition in two striking figures : Of Jerusalem he says, "As a cistern keepeth cool its water, so she reneweth her wickedness" (vi. 7) ; and of the country at large, "The sin of Judah is written with an iron style, with a diamond point ; graven on the tablet of their hearts, and on the horns of their<sup>9</sup> altars" (xvii. 1). A third is even stronger, "Doth the Kushite change his skin, or the leopard its spots? if so, ye can do well who are trained to evil" (xiii. 23). The evident intent of these and many other passages in the book of Jeremiah is to represent the Jews of the day as thoroughly corrupt ; but it would be a mistake to suppose the prophet to mean that this corruption was absolutely universal, and a still greater error to cite him as an authority for the doctrine of inherent or hereditary depravity. The nearest approach to any such teaching is found in the declaration that "the heart is deceitful above everything, yea, it is corrupt" (xvii. 9) ; but even this passage does not contain the doctrine in question, for the context clearly shows that it is a description of the condition, not of the race, but of him "whose heart turneth from Yahweh" (v. 5). In this, therefore, as in the passages previously cited, Jeremiah teaches that the corruption of which he accuses his countrymen is the result of their own voluntary conduct. See also iv. 4. He could not do otherwise and be consistent, for, in another place (xxx. 29 f.), he virtually repudiates the idea of the transmission of guilt from one generation to another. He was moved to this declaration on hearing the proverb in which the ungodly of his time parodied the familiar description of Yahweh as "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (Ex. xx. 5 ; etc.). He said, "In those days they shall

<sup>9</sup> The "your" of the Hebrew text is an error.

no longer say, Fathers have eaten green grapes, and children's teeth are set on edge ; but each shall die for his own iniquity : whosoever eateth the green grapes shall have his own teeth set on edge." True, the prophet represents the application of this law as yet future ; but that is a matter of form, a device to secure the adoption of the new view without offending the prejudices of the faithful or permitting their enemies to triumph over them.<sup>10</sup>

The ideal relation between two beings such as God and man are represented by Jeremiah, is easily imagined. Yahweh, on his part, since he is good as well as righteous, cannot but employ the infinite resources both of his power and his wisdom for the welfare of his creature ; while man, on his part, must render to his Creator and Benefactor *exclusive reverence* and *unqualified submission*. This is the substance of the prophet's utterances in the various passages in which he has occasion to touch upon the subject. In ii. 2 f. he teaches that the existence of such a relation is the secret of the glory of the golden period when the Hebrews became a nation. Yahweh there says to Jerusalem, "I recall concerning thee the tenderness of thy youth, the affection of thy bridal estate ; how thou followedst me in the desert, in a land unsown." This of the attitude of Israel toward their God. There follows a corresponding description of the attitude of Yahweh toward his people : "Israel was holy to Yahweh, his first-fruits of the harvest ; all who devoured him became guilty, evil came upon them." In other words, when the covenant between Yahweh and the Hebrews, to which Jeremiah elsewhere repeatedly refers (vii. 23 ; xi. 4 ; etc.), was made, they were as devoted to Yahweh as a bride to her newly wedded husband, and he guarded them as jealously as his priests the first-fruits set apart for their exclusive consumption (Deu. xviii. 4). The enjoyment of the relation described, according to Jeremiah, is the highest good. This is the meaning of the passage in which Yahweh says, "Let him that boasteth make this his boast, that he is wise in the knowledge [recognition] that I am Yahweh, who do kindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth" (ix. 23/24). Finally, the prophet represents the restoration of this relation as the central feature of the glorious future which he predicted. Thus, in xxiv. 7, speaking for Yahweh, he says, "I will give them a heart to know that I am Yahweh ; and they shall be to me a people, and I will be to them God, when they return to me

<sup>10</sup> The view here taken is not disturbed by xxxii. 18, where the thought of Ex. xx. 5 is put into the mouth of the prophet ; since xxxii. 17 a $\beta$ -23 is clearly an addition to the original prayer in the later style of Neh. ix. 6-37. See Giesebrecht.

with all their hearts." The same thought is more fully expressed in xxxi. 33 f., where Yahweh says, "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Yahweh: I will put my law within them, yea, on their hearts will I write it; and I will be to them God, and they shall be to me a people. Then shall they no longer teach each his friend and each his brother, saying, Know Yahweh! for all of them shall know me from their least to their greatest, saith Yahweh."

There could hardly be a stronger contrast than that between Jeremiah's ideal and the reality by which he was constantly confronted. In the first place, as has already been indicated, the Jews of his day generally refused to recognize Yahweh's claim to be the only true God. Many of them doubtless entirely deserted him and transferred their allegiance to another god, or distributed their reverence among a number of other divinities (ii. 11; iii. 1; etc.). Jeremiah says that the gods of Judah were as numerous as its cities (ii. 28), and that every thoroughfare in Jerusalem had its altar (xi. 13). Ishtar seems to have been Yahweh's most seductive rival. The zeal displayed in her honor is vividly depicted in vii. 18, where he protests "The children gather sticks and the fathers kindle fire, while the women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven . . . that they may provoke me to anger." Some tried to combine the worship of Yahweh with the service of one or more of the gods of their neighbors: *e.g.* burning incense to Baal, but now and then, perhaps with the idea of avoiding possible danger, paying a formal visit to the altar of Yahweh (vii. 9; see also vii. 30 and xxxii. 34). Thus, in one degree or another, the great mass of the Jews of the latter part of the seventh century B.C. neglected the God to whom they owed their existence as a nation. This, however, was not the extent of their offending. With the worship they had adopted the morality, or, more correctly, the immorality, of their neighbors. The prophet charges them with almost every offence known to his generation. In the passage just cited (vii. 9) he enumerates four of the most serious, all expressly prohibited by the Decalogue, theft, murder, adultery, and perjury. Elsewhere he adds to the list, not only pride (xiii. 9), ingratitude (ii. 6 f., 20; etc.), obstinacy (v. 3; viii. 5; etc.), and hypocrisy (xii. 2), but fraud (v. 26 f.; viii. 8; etc.), treachery (v. 1; ix. 3/4; etc.), slander (v. 28; ix. 3/4; etc.), injustice (v. 28; vii. 6; etc.), rapacity (viii. 10; xxii. 17; etc.), oppression (xxii. 17; xxxiv. 16; etc.), and sacrilege (vii. 30; xxiii. 11; etc.). In short, he accuses his countrymen of having virtually repudiated the law, the

teaching in which, through the prophets, Yahweh had revealed to them his character and requirements.

The God of Israel, according to Jeremiah, is acutely sensitive to, and therefore profoundly affected by, the attitude and deportment of his people toward him. He complains of their neglect to honor him, their Deliverer. "Doth a maid forget her ornament, a bride her girdle? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (ii. 32; see also *v.* 11). Their devotion to other gods provokes him to anger (*vii.* 18 ff.; *viii.* 19; etc.); so, also, their persistent disregard of his instruction (*vi.* 19; *xvi.* 11 ff.; etc.): and his resentment grows with the multiplication of their transgressions. It is sometimes represented as settling into a chronic aversion (*xii.* 8; *xv.* 1; etc.), but usually as bursting into active hostility (*iv.* 4, 7; etc.). In *iv.* 23 ff. the prophet depicts the terrors of Yahweh's wrath as they presented themselves to his inspired vision: "I behold the earth, and lo! it is waste and void; the heavens, also, and they have no light. I behold the mountains, and lo! they quake; while all the hills tremble. I behold, and lo! there is no man; even the fowl of the heavens are fled. I behold, and lo! the garden is a desert; and all its cities are torn down before Yahweh on account of his glowing anger." Elsewhere the calamities of the past are interpreted as only so many expressions of the divine displeasure (*iii.* 3 ff.; *v.* 3; etc.); and the direst misfortunes, slaughter, famine, pestilence, and banishment are predicted as the result of its continuance (*xv.* 2 ff.; *xxiv.* 8 ff.; etc.). The surrounding nations, of course, being idolaters, are condemned to drink of the same cup with the Jews whom they have corrupted (*xxv.* 15 ff.); so that it would seem as if, according to Jeremiah, mankind were doomed to total extinction.

The times in which Jeremiah lived and labored were seriously "out of joint," but it would be a mistake to suppose that he saw nothing to give him comfort or encouragement. There were incidents in his life that were calculated to make him think more kindly than his ordinary experience would warrant him in thinking of his generation. He repeatedly accused his contemporaries of treachery toward one another and disloyalty to God; but when the Rechabites, fleeing before Nebuchadrezzar, took refuge in Jerusalem, he found them so different from the mass of the Jews that he was moved to commend them as examples of fidelity. "The words," said he, "which Jonadab the son of Rechab commanded his sons, that they drink not wine, are performed; and they have not drunk it unto this day, but have obeyed their father's command: yet I have spoken

unto you early and often, and ye have not hearkened unto me" (xxxv. 14). Later, when he was thrown into prison, and himself suffered, as he had often seen others suffer, from the cruelty of the rulers of his people, he was rescued from this critical situation by Ebed-melek, a Kushite eunuch (xxxviii. 7 ff.), and thus reminded that humanity was not after all a lost virtue. These are individual instances. The prophet must have seen other manifestations of the same sort, otherwise he could hardly have withstood the depressing influence of the corruption of which he was by turns a sorrowful and an indignant witness, and have continued, as he did to the end, to work and to hope, first for the deliverance of his people from the fate that he saw impending, and, when this was no longer possible, for the restoration of a remnant to the favor of Yahweh and a place among the nations.

The zeal of the prophet for the deliverance of his people from the misfortunes which they were suffering and were destined to suffer constantly manifests itself in his prophecies. He seldom uttered a warning without at the same time showing how the impending danger could be averted. It is time to inquire what he taught that a nation or an individual must do to be saved. The substance of his teaching can be stated in a few words. He promised his people deliverance, personal and national, on the simple condition that they return to their allegiance to Yahweh. He did not, however, often put the terms into this succinct form. He usually dwelt now on one, and now on another, of the various stages of feeling or details of conduct which such a change of relation implied or involved. He saw, for example, that it was necessary for the Jews first of all to recognize the wrongness of their actual bearing and actions. He therefore supplements a declaration that Yahweh is waiting to show mercy to them with the exhortation, "Only acknowledge thy iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against Yahweh thy God, and hast strayed in thy ways to strangers, under every green tree, and not obeyed my voice, saith Yahweh" (iii. 12 f.). He himself, in his plea for Jerusalem and Judah, confesses their sins: "We acknowledge, Yahweh, our wickedness and the iniquity of our fathers; for we have sinned against thee" (xiv. 20). The recognition of guilt naturally produces penitence. The prophet therefore expects his people to show signs of contrition in view of their offences. He says that he listened in vain for tokens of this sort from Judah, "No man repenteth of his wickedness, saying, What have I done" (viii. 6)? On the other hand he anticipates the day when Ephraim will say, "Thou hast

chastised me, and I was chastised, like a calf unbroken. Receive me, that I may return; for thou art Yahweh my God. For turning I repent, and confessing I beat my thigh; I am ashamed, yea, confounded, because I bear the reproach of my youth" (xxxi. 18 f.).

These are almost the only passages in which repentance is so directly enjoined; and here it is evidently not required for its own sake, but as the emotional impulse resulting in a return to Yahweh. By a return to Yahweh Jeremiah meant the restoration of the ideal relation of man, especially the Hebrew, to his God; which, as has already been shown, involved, in the first place, the recognition of Yahweh as the exclusive object of worship. The prophet repeatedly exhorts his people to return to Yahweh in this sense. In iii. 1-iv. 2, the subject of which is the unfaithfulness of Israel, there are four such exhortations (iii. 4, 14,<sup>11</sup> 22; iv. 1). See also xxiv. 7; xxv. 5 f. In xxxv. 15 Yahweh says that the burden of the message of his prophets has long been, "Return ye, each from his evil way, and practise well-doing; nor go after other gods to serve them."

Jeremiah did not undertake to prescribe how Yahweh should be worshipped, but he expressed himself in such a way as to make it clear that he did not set much value upon the ecclesiastical institutions of his day. In fact it seems as if he would have liked to see them abolished. He openly repudiated as a superstition the current notion with reference to the sanctuary at Jerusalem; warning his people not to join in the cry, "It is Yahweh's temple! Yahweh's temple! Yahweh's temple" (vii. 4)! as if they held Yahweh a hostage for their safety, and citing the case of Shiloh to show that he could not be tethered to any locality, and that a deserted sanctuary was anything but a desirable refuge (vii. 12). "Therefore," he adds, "thus saith Yahweh, I will do to the house that is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and to the place that I gave to you and your fathers, as I did to Shiloh" (vii. 14). A repetition of this threat would have cost the prophet his life, had he not been rescued by Ahikam ben Shaphan from the mob before which he was arraigned (xxvi. 4 ff.).

Jeremiah was equally heretical, from the standpoint of his contemporaries, in his teaching concerning the ark of the covenant; which they regarded as the actual abode of Yahweh and the seat of his power, and which, therefore, in spite of their disregard of his will, they guarded with the utmost jealousy. In defiance of this supersti-

<sup>11</sup> Giesebrecht brackets iii. 14-18 entire, but explains (p. 17) that 14-16 is an excerpt from a genuine prophecy, probably that in ch. xxxi.

tion, the prophet, speaking of the better future, says, "In those days they shall no longer say, The ark of Yahweh's covenant! nor shall it come to mind; nay, they shall not miss it, and it shall not be remade" (iii. 16).

Jeremiah, like Amos (v. 21 ff.) and Isaiah (i. 10 ff.), taught that the offerings prescribed by the Hebrew ritual, in themselves considered, were worthless as a means of securing the favor of the Deity. In vi. 20 he makes Yahweh say, "Of what value, then, to me is incense come from Sheba, and the fine cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are no pleasure, nor are your sacrifices acceptable to me." The same doctrine reappears in xiv. 12: "When they fast, I will not listen to their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and oblation I will show them no favor." These are strange statements to come from one who had not only been reared in priestly circles, but had himself lived by the sanctuary; but they do not represent the extent to which Jeremiah broke with his order as well as the rest of his people. In vii. 22 f., speaking in the name of Yahweh, he makes the startling declaration, "I spake not with your fathers, neither did I command them, when I brought them forth from the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offering and sacrifice; but this thing I commanded them, saying, Listen to my voice, and I will be to you God, and ye shall be to me a people; and walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you." This has been interpreted as meaning merely that, in the Sinaitic legislation, the stress is not on the ritual, but on the terms of the covenant there made, and such an interpretation might, perhaps, be defended, if it were supported by the internal evidence of the legislation itself; since, however, the ceremonial laws can easily be shown to be later than the Book of the Covenant (Ex. xxi.-xxiii.), and especially since Jeremiah, in the next chapter (v. 8), in reply to an appeal to the Law, accuses the scribes of handling a deceitful pen, one can hardly avoid the conclusion that the prophet here denies the Mosaic authorship and the divine authority of any regulations "concerning burnt offering and sacrifice."

In view of the prophet's attitude toward the place and the forms of worship it is not difficult to guess what he thought and said about the rite by which Israelites were admitted to the privileges of citizenship, circumcision. He refers to it three times (iv. 4; vi. 10; ix. 24/25 f.), and always in terms clearly showing that he attached no serious importance to its observance. In ix. 24/25 f. he calls attention to the fact that it was not a distinctively Hebrew institution,

and declares that, except as the symbol of a spiritual condition, it is as useless to a Jew as it is to an Egyptian.

It is evident that Jeremiah made little account of the externals of religion.<sup>12</sup> He was not, however, a mere iconoclast. He insisted upon a circumcision of the heart (iv. 4). He encouraged his people, also, to seek Yahweh, promising them that, when they came to him with their whole hearts, bringing an offering of sincere devotion, he would hear and help them (xxix. 12 f.). The efficacy of such approaches to Yahweh is finely pictured in xvii. 7 ff., where the prophet says, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Yahweh, that hath Yahweh for his support! He is like a tree planted by the water, that sendeth its roots to the stream; so that he hath no fear when heat cometh, but his foliage is green. Even in the year of a drought he doth not despair or cease to yield fruit."

The return to Yahweh preached by Jeremiah involved, secondly, a radical reformation in life and conduct. The necessity of such a reformation is evident from the prophet's utterances, already cited, with reference to the moral condition of his people. Their persistent violation of the will of Yahweh as revealed in the teachings of his messengers had made it impossible for him, so long as he remained true to his nature, to show them any favor. Jeremiah, therefore, endeavored to persuade them to cease the practice of the sins by which they had alienated their God, and so act that he might see his will reflected in their lives and thus be moved to complacency toward them. Sometimes the requirement to "listen to [obey] the voice of Yahweh," a favorite expression with Jeremiah (iii. 13, 25; vii. 23; etc.), denotes or includes the acceptance of the prophetic standard of morality. In vii. 23, as well as in xi. 3 f., he evidently has in mind especially the Deuteronomic legislation, which, when these passages

<sup>12</sup> There are a few passages in the book of Jeremiah which cannot be harmonized with the above statement. Among them are xxxi. 14 and xxxiii. 14 ff., in which there is manifested far greater regard for priests and offerings than has hitherto been discovered. A closer study of these passages, however, and a careful comparison of their content with that of xviii. 18 and xxiii. 5 ff., will convince the student that they represent, not Jeremiah, but a later writer who cherished ideas respecting religion similar to those of the prophet's enemies, and who considered it his duty to supplement their endeavors to prevent the wayward priest from teaching the contrary. The long passage (xvii. 19 ff.) on the observance of the sabbath, in which the subject of offerings also receives passing attention (v. 26), as its resemblance to Nch. xiii. 15 ff. clearly indicates, is from the same source. On the passages here cited see Giesebrecht; also Driver, *ILOT*.



were written, had just been discovered and promulgated.<sup>13</sup> See also the expression "amend your ways" or "deeds" (vii. 3, 5; xviii. 11; etc.). In most cases the prophet's teaching takes the form of condemnation of the evil practices of his time, and demands or exhortations that the corresponding virtues be substituted for them. On one occasion he presented to the king (Zedekiah) a programme of reformation, or statement of terms on which Yahweh would grant him and his people a new lease of life and prosperity. These terms were: "Do justice and righteousness, and rescue the spoiled from the hand of the oppressor. Moreover, the stranger, the orphan, and the widow thou shalt not distress or abuse; nor shalt thou shed innocent blood in this place" (xxii. 3). It was the failure of the nation, although they were at first frightened into temporarily releasing their Hebrew slaves, to meet these requirements, that stirred the prophet to one of his severest denunciations (xxxiv. 8 ff.). The most instructive passage bearing on this point, however, is vii. 3 ff., where the necessity of morality in addition to the abandonment of idolatry is strongly emphasized. The words used, some of which have already been quoted, are: "Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your works, and I will let you dwell in this place. Trust not in deceptive words, saying, It is Yahweh's temple, Yahweh's temple, Yahweh's temple! for, if ye will thoroughly amend your ways and your works, if ye will indeed do justice one with another, not oppressing the stranger, the orphan, and the widow, or going after other gods to your hurt; then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, henceforth forever. Lo! ye trust in deceptive words without profit. What? steal, kill, an commit adultery, and swear falsely, and sacrifice to Baal, and go after other gods that ye know not, and come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name, and say, We are saved"? It is clear that, according to Jeremiah, nothing could take the place of the observance of the dictates of social and personal morality; but that those who were faithful to these requirements were sure of the favor and blessing of the Almighty.

Jeremiah taught, in general, that those who trusted in Yahweh would lack for nothing good (vi. 16; vii. 23; xvii. 7 f.; etc.); but usually, when addressing his rebellious countrymen, he restricted the

<sup>13</sup> The expression "I will be to you God," etc., or its equivalent, is found in Ex. vi. 7; Deu. xxvi. 17 f.; xxix. 12/13. "Be well with" is frequent in Deuteronomy (iv. 40; v. 16; vi. 18; etc.), but is found only twice elsewhere (Gen. xii. 13; xl. 14) in the Pentateuch. See Graf on Jer. vii. 23.

promise with which he accompanied his warning or exhortation to relief from actual distress or danger. Thus, in some passages (xviii. 8; xxv. 6; xxvi. 3, 13; xxxvi. 3) the inducement to reformation is put into the form of a mere suggestion that Yahweh may still be moved to repent of the evil that he has planned and do his people no harm. In others (iv. 1; vii. 3, 7; etc.) he says that, if they will return to Yahweh, they will not be removed, but will be allowed to remain in their own country. In xxii. 3 f. he becomes more positive, promising that, if the king will govern justly, the kingdom shall not only continue but enjoy renewed prosperity. Finding that the nation as a whole was incorrigible, the prophet was obliged to leave them to their fate, excepting those only who had assisted him or sympathized with him in his mission; and they were not encouraged to expect, for the time being, much beyond the preservation of their lives. See xxxix. 15 ff., but especially xlv. 2 ff., where this divine message to Baruch, the prophet's friend and scribe, is recorded: "If thou seekest for thyself great things, seek them not; for lo! I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith Yahweh; yet shalt thou escape with thy life in all places whither thou goest."

The prophet witnessed the fulfilment of his predictions with reference to his country. He saw Jerusalem taken and Judah reduced to a Babylonian province, while many of its inhabitants were led captive in the train of the conqueror. At the same time, however, he perceived that the overthrow of the Jewish state was a necessary preparation for the foundation of a new community whose influence would be universal and its duration everlasting. He had already had inspired intimations that this was to be the outcome. Early in the reign of Zedekiah, if not before, he had begun to teach that there was to be a restoration. Soon after the deportation of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) and those who went with the king to Babylon (2 Kgs. xxiv. 14 ff.) he was instructed to say of the captives: "Thus saith Yahweh, the God of Israel, . . . I will set my eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; yea, I will build them up and not tear them down, I will plant and not uproot them" (xxiv. 6). A little later, writing to prevent the captives from indulging the false hopes excited by other prophets, he said (xxix. 10 f.), "Thus saith Yahweh, When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfil concerning you my good word, to restore you to this place. For I know the thoughts that I am thinking concerning you, saith Yahweh, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a hopeful future." Just before the final capture

of Jerusalem, when the Chaldeans had surrounded the city, by divine direction he bought of his cousin Hanamel a field at Anathoth as a sign to his people that they or their descendants should again "buy fields for money, and write deeds and seal them, and summon witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, and in the environs of Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the highlands, and in the cities of the lowlands, and in the cities of the southland ; for I will restore their captives, saith Yahweh" (xxxii. 44). See also xxiii. 3 ; xxxii. 37 ; xxxiii. 10 ff. Moreover, he taught that the glory of the event promised would eclipse even that of the deliverance from Egypt (xxiii. 7 f.).

The passage just quoted (xxxii. 44) would seem to indicate that Jeremiah's expectations were confined to the southern kingdom. This, however, is not the case ; for, among his earliest prophecies occurs a passage (iii. 14) in which the prospect of restoration to Yahweh's favor is represented as brighter for Israel than for Judah, and in one of the latest he dwells with evident pleasure on the gracious promises there given to his northern brethren. This is his picture of Israel's future : "Thus saith Yahweh, . . . I will rebuild thee and thou shalt be rebuilt, fair Israel. Again shalt thou adorn thyself with thy tabrets and go forth to dance with the merrymakers ; again shalt thou plant vineyards in the mountains of Samaria ; they that plant shall [both] plant and enjoy" (xxxi. 2, 4 f.). Thus it appears that Israel as well as Judah is to return to Palestine. In fact, they are coupled together as the joint recipients of the divine favor. Thus, in xxxi. 27 f., Yahweh says, "Lo ! days come, saith Yahweh, when I will sow the kingdom [lit. house] of Israel and the kingdom of Judah with the seed of men and the seed of cattle, and it shall be that, as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, so will I watch over them to build and plant, saith Jehovah." See also xxxiii. 7.

In spite of his tenderness for Israel, however, the prophet gives Judah the preëminence under the new, as under the original, order of things. In the first place, Jerusalem is to recover the glory and ascendancy that it enjoyed under Solomon. "It shall be a joyous name, an honor, and an ornament, in the sight of all the nations of the earth ; which shall hear all the good that I will do to it [orig. them], and fear and tremble on account of all the good and all the peace that I will procure for it" (xxxiii. 9). It will also again become the religious centre of Palestine. "The watchmen on the hills of Ephraim shall cry, Arise and let us go up to Zion, to Yahweh our God" (xxxi. 6). Finally, a son of David, arising, will again

make it the political as well as the religious capital of the Hebrews, according to xxiii. 5 f., which says, "Lo ! days come, saith Yahweh, when I will raise up to David a righteous shoot, and he shall rule as king, and show wisdom, and do justice and righteousness, in the land. In his days shall Judah be helped and Israel dwell secure ; and this is the name by which they shall call him, Yahweh-is-our-righteousness."

One of the passages above quoted (xxxiii. 9) suggests the question, Whether Jeremiah taught that the other nations were to share in the blessings in store for re-united Israel. The answer must be affirmative. The possibility of the participation of the neighboring peoples in the future of Yahweh's chosen is distinctly asserted in xii. 16, where Yahweh says, "It shall come to pass that, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, swearing by my name, As Yahweh liveth ! even as they have taught my people to swear by Baal, then shall they be rebuilt (after having been plucked up for the injuries done to Israel) in the midst of my people." In iv. 2 the realization of this possibility seems to be,<sup>14</sup> and in xvi. 19 it certainly is, predicted. In the latter passage Jeremiah, triumphing for the moment over all the obstacles to his faith, exclaims, "Yahweh, my strength, and my stronghold, and my refuge, in the day of affliction, to thee shall nations come from the ends of the earth ; yea, they shall say, Surely our fathers inherited frauds, vanities, among which there is none that profiteth."<sup>15</sup> This means nothing less than the conversion of the world to the worship and service of the true and only God.

In xxxi. 6 to go to Yahweh is equivalent to going to Jerusalem. It is therefore probable that, when Jeremiah described the nations as coming from the ends of the earth and renouncing their hereditary divinities for the God of the Hebrews (xvi. 19), he thought of them as making pilgrimages to the city, or, perhaps, as sometimes migrating from their ancestral homes to Palestine. See xii. 16. Not that he meant to teach that Yahweh could be worshipped acceptably only at the Jewish capital. He had learned during his long contest with his people that religion was not a matter of altars and ceremonies, but that he, and therefore any one, could come to God anywhere and without the intervention of priest or ritual. His refusal to confine

<sup>14</sup> Giesebrecht maintains that the pronoun "him" refers to Israel, not Yahweh, but admits that the nations could hardly glory in Israel unless they had a share in the favor of Israel's God. Comp. Streane.

<sup>15</sup> Giesebrecht insists upon the genuineness of this verse, but removes it from its present connection and substitutes it for xvii. 11-13.

Yahweh to Zion, to accept the popular superstition respecting the ark, to recognize the priestly ritual of his time as divinely ordained, or to ascribe any efficacy to the rite of circumcision has been noted. He gives more positive instruction on the subject. In his letter to the earlier Jewish exiles (xxix.), to which reference has also been made, he first instructs them to pray for the peace of the city to which they have been deported, implying that their prayers will be heard and answered to their advantage (*v.* 7); and then exhorts them in Yahweh's name to seek him, expressly promising them that their search shall not be in vain (*xxv.* 12 f.) : <sup>16</sup> *i.e.* the prophet here teaches that, though driven from their country, the exiles are still under the eye of Yahweh, and though deprived of the means of fulfilling the requirements of their ritual, they may still enjoy access to their God. But the doctrine that man can come in the spirit directly to God is only one side of a great truth. Jeremiah gave his people the other also, teaching that Yahweh could come directly to each of his worshippers, and that, in the good time coming, this would be the universal experience. These are the words of this great promise (xxxi. 34) : "They shall teach no longer each his neighbor, and each his brother, saying, Know Yahweh ! for they shall all know me from their least to their greatest, saith Yahweh." They transform the religion of the Hebrews into a religion for mankind.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The word "go" in *v.* 12, if it is the correct reading (which Giesebrecht denies), since it cannot be interpreted as requiring a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, must refer to a practice of praying in secret (*Dan.* vi. 10), or, as Ewald prefers to think, in certain places where numbers assembled for the purpose.

<sup>17</sup> The above discussion of the future of Israel and the world takes account only of the passages bearing on the subject found in such portions of the book of Jeremiah as may safely be attributed to the prophet. The teaching of the parts of the book whose genuineness is denied or questioned is sometimes different. In the first place, there are certain passages (*iv.* 27 b; *v.* 10 a $\beta$ , 18) in which a promise of mercy is inserted, not as a stimulus to human effort, but as a modification of the divine severity. The passages bearing on the return from Babylon are *xvi.* 14 f.; *xxix.* 14; *xxx.* 3, 10 f., 16 ff.; *xxxi.* 10 f., 23 f., 35 ff.; *xxxiii.* 23 ff.; *xlvi.* 27 f.; *i.* 2 ff., 17 ff. The first is a mistaken quotation from *ch.* xxiii. (7 f.). The second, which promises that captives located in a certain city (*v.* 7) shall be gathered from all the nations whither they have been driven, and is therefore evidently an interpolation, has no doctrinal peculiarities. In those that remain the deliverance foretold is usually represented either as a triumph over the nation's enemies (*xxx.* 10 f., 16 ff.; *xxxi.* 10 f.; *xlvi.* 27 f.; *i.* 17 ff.) or the fulfilment of a covenant (*xxxi.* 35 ff.; *xxxiii.* 23 ff.) : in a word, they betray the influence of the particularism which Jeremiah repudiated. The same influence shows itself in some of the passages (*iii.* 18; *xxxi.* 1; *xxxiii.* 14, 24 ff.; *i.* 4 f.) in which Judah and Israel are coupled together as participants in the restoration. Where

the future of Jerusalem is described, it is the religious, rather than the political, importance of the city that is emphasized. Thus, iii. 17 says that it is to be called "the throne of Yahweh" (see also xxxi. 12); and in xxxiii. 16 ff. it usurps the name, Yahweh-is-our-righteousness, which Jeremiah gave to the shoot from the stock of David whose advent he predicted, while this unique figure loses himself in an endless line of featureless Davidites. See also xxx. 9, 21. The nations seem to have been overlooked in these ungenune prophecies, except iii. 17. The "servant of Jehovah" in xxx. 10 and xlvi. 27 has no mission to them. Not so with the priests, whom Jeremiah mentioned only to upbraid them. They and their interests here receive marked attention. The author of xxxiii. 14 ff., like the prophet's persecutors (xviii. 18), cannot conceive of a religion without a ritual and priests to administer it. He therefore represents Yahweh as announcing not only that "David shall never want a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel," but as adding, "neither shall the Levitic priests want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and burn vegetable offerings, and perform sacrifices" (xxxiii. 17 f.). Finally, Yahweh declares that his promise to the Levites, like that to the house of David, is as sure as the order of nature (*vv.* 20 f.) and that the seed of the former, as well as those of the latter, shall rival the stars of heaven and the sand of the seashore for multitude (*v.* 22). In xxxi. 14 provision is made for the sustenance of this sacerdotal host. All this is in striking contrast with the breadth of Jeremiah; but the climax of narrowness is reached in xxx. 20, where the Israel of the future is described as a "congregation." See Lev. iv. 13; etc.